

Schaumburg, IL - Hyatt Regency Woodfield

Remarks as Prepared

Thank you President Stroger, Mayor Mullins and Rev. Brooks.

It is an honor to be here, and I appreciate the opportunity to personally recognize Dr. Martin Luther King and his lasting contribution to the causes of racial equality and civil rights.

That legacy thrives not only in history books, not just on this day, but in the hearts and minds of the American people.

History remembers Dr. King, but it is up to us to sustain that legacy by ensuring the nation we live in – and will leave to future generations – respects justice, equality and our fundamental human rights.

As a mom, I want my children to live in the kind of world all generations deserve. The safety of their air, the quality of their education, their ability to succeed in a world growing ever more difficult to navigate.

Those are challenges all parents face – challenges I confront as a mother and in Washington.

But I also want my girls to live in a nation where all people are equal – and where nobody is denied opportunity, respect or hope regardless of their race, religion, heritage or any other quality so often used to divide us.

As parents, we must embrace that legacy of Dr. King, whose leadership, vision and struggle resulted in justice for the millions of Americans who had been denied their civil rights for generations.

The day I was sworn in as a member of Congress, my family and I visited the Lincoln Memorial.

My girls and I walked up the same marble steps where Dr. King stood over 40 years before to articulate his dream that his own children would one day live in a nation where they would not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.

We stood in the same symbolic shadow of the President who ended the captivity of millions suffering in slavery.

And my husband and I led our girls to the south end of the memorial, and asked them to read aloud Lincoln's words inscribed on the soaring wall.

"It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the

people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

My responsibility as a parent – and of all parents – is to teach our children that those basic tenets are the most fundamental moral values we share as people.

President Lincoln and Dr. King shared that same vision for our nation. And today, we honor Dr. King for his tireless devotion to justice that changed the course of our country's history.

Let us never forget Dr. King's legacy. Let us never stop his fight for equality and civil rights for all. And let us ensure that his legacy lives on in our children and those of all future generations.

It is an honor to be here tonight, and I thank you once again for the opportunity.

###